THE BRIDGE
A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

2021: Art & (re)Conciliation

MAR 18-21
I am so pleased to welcome you to the inaugural Bridge Festival. This Festival of Ideas aims to provoke a conversation, and to build understanding and a collective commitment to confront the pertinent issues of our time. Envisioned as a gathering place where we can exchange ideas with great artists, thinkers and audiences The Bridge is about forging relationships to carve a path forward through common purpose.

I moved to Treaty 1 Territory in early 2019 to become the Artistic Director of Royal MTC and to this day I continue to be amazed at the powerful energy of this place where the muddy waters converge. As Winnipeg means muddy waters. It is no surprise to me that this is also the home to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. As a third-generation settler, I am hopeful because the truth is finally being told as openly to my child as it was shielded from me, growing up. We know how fraught this word ‘reconciliation’ is and that it is empty without all of us confronting the great harms that colonization has inflicted upon the First Peoples. This is the truth, and we must own it.

While we cannot gather in person, this digital edition is an assembly of some of the most exciting Indigenous artists in the land. My deepest gratitude goes to Kim Wheeler who lovingly curated the festival and brought together this remarkable line-up to grapple with the concept of Art and (re)Conciliation. Art has always been a conduit for change and the powerful voices that have joined this conversation in The Bridge are pushing this truth forward. I am so very humbled to listen and learn from them this week.

Thank-you so much for joining us.
The land the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre sits on is the traditional gathering place of the Anishinaabe, Nêhiyaw (Cree) and Oyate (Dakota) and the home of the Métis. Winnipeg has become a centre of Indigenous arts in Canada, so it makes sense Royal MTC has chosen to honour Indigenous artists by making space for us at the inaugural festival of The Bridge: A Festival of Ideas.

The theme of this 2021 digital edition of The Bridge is Art & (re)Conciliation. Reconciliation has become a loaded term and has generated a lot of conversations among Indigenous peoples. But reconciliation isn’t up to us. It is up to non-Indigenous people to conciliate their feelings and teachings of Indigenous people. Artistic Director Kelly Thornton has taken those first steps for Royal MTC in making space. And the Indigenous arts community has answered their invite.

We have so many incredibly talented and driven people who have embraced the arts as their calling: actors, writers, musicians, fine artists, producers, directors, poets, journalists and many others from all entertainment sectors.

To be able to offer a platform to help elevate their voices is a great honour for me. As a journalist, my personal mandate has always been to bring positive Indigenous stories to the media and masses. Curating The Bridge: Art & (re)Conciliation has been the culmination of 28 years of covering the Indigenous arts community.

I’ve built bridges and friendships that have helped me engage the artists you will see during The Bridge – all who have offered up their time with zero hesitation and for that I am truly grateful.

Kim Wheeler
The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1 land, the traditional territory of the Ininew, Anishinaabe and Oyate (Dakota) peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, and we are committed to the responsibilities of the Treaty. Hiy Hiy, Miigwetch, Wopida and Maarsii.

### Schedule

**THURSDAY, MARCH 18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-10:15AM</td>
<td>Opening Prayer with Elders Barb Nepinak and Clarence Nepinak</td>
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<td>Land Acknowledgement</td>
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<td>Welcoming Message with Kim Wheeler</td>
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<td>10:15-11:15AM</td>
<td>Panel: Theatre Matriarchs</td>
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<td>1PM</td>
<td>In Conversation with Rosanna Deerchild: Tomson Highway</td>
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**FRIDAY, MARCH 19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10AM</td>
<td>Panel: From Script to Stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1PM</td>
<td>In Conversation with Rosanna Deerchild: Jesse Wente</td>
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<tr>
<td>7PM</td>
<td>Excerpts from the Stage</td>
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SATURDAY, MARCH 20

10AM  Panel: Dance Ogichidas

12PM  In Conversation with Rosanna Deerchild: Dr. Heather Igloliorte/Dr. Julie Nagam

2PM   Keynote Speech with Senator Murray Sinclair and Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair

7PM   Music of the Land

SUNDAY, MARCH 21

10AM  Panel: Acimowin (To tell story)

12PM  In Conversation with Rosanna Deerchild: Kent Monkman

2PM   Livestreamed Production: Isitwendam (An Understanding) – see pg. 30

MARCH 18-21

A Mile in our Moccasins Walking Tour
Keynote Speech

SENATOR MURRAY SINCLAIR AND DR. NIIGAANWEWIDAM SINCLAIR
Saturday, March 20 at 2pm

Imagine being at a family dinner with Senator Murray Sinclair and his award-winning columnist son Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair. What would that conversation sound like? In 2015, when Justice Sinclair was Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the TRC delivered its final report. Since then conversations have swirled but what has actually been accomplished? Senator Sinclair and Dr. Sinclair reflect on how art can push a conversation forward and what needs to be done to conciliate the country.
Your favourite cousin Rosanna Deerchild brings her 25-year career of asking questions and listening intently to extended conversations with some of the top thinkers, artists and visionaries in Canada. Join Rosanna as she delves into the lives and thoughts of visual artist Kent Monkman; Jesse Wente, chair of the Canada Council and executive director of the Indigenous Screen Office; Dr. Julie Nagam and Dr. Heather Igloliorte, co-chairs of the Winnipeg Art Gallery’s Indigenous Advisory Circle; and beloved playwright Tomson Highway.

Thursday, March 18 at 1pm
GUEST
Tomson Highway

Friday, March 19 at 1pm
GUEST
Jesse Wente

Saturday, March 20 at 12pm
GUESTS
Dr. Heather Igloliorte and Dr. Julie Nagam

Sunday, March 21 at 12pm
GUEST
Kent Monkman
Panels

THEATRE MATRIARCHS
Thursday, March 18 at 10:15am

The women on this panel discussion have kicked down doors to tread the boards at theatres across Turtle Island (also known as North America). The moderator for Theatre Matriarchs is Frances Koncan. Her play Women of the Fur Trade was performed at Royal MTC Warehouse last season. She is joined by some of her sheroes to talk about the struggles and triumphs of being Indigenous kwe in Canadian theatre: Columpa Bobb, Margo Kane, Monique Mojica and Tracey Nepinak!

PANELISTS
Columpa Bobb
Margo Kane
Monique Mojica
Tracey Nepinak

MODERATOR
Frances Koncan

FROM SCRIPT TO STAGE
Friday, March 19 at 10am

Join award-winning playwright Ian Ross (fareWel) for a conversation with some of Canada’s most influential and thought-provoking playwrights. Kenneth T. Williams (Thunderstick), Kevin Loring (Where the Blood Mixes), Tara Beagan (Deer Woman) and Marie Clements (The Unnatural and Accidental Women) join Ian to talk about taking an idea and watching it grow from the page to the stage. Together they have written over 70 plays, have been the recipients of several prestigious awards and continue to add to the cultural conversation with their words.

PANELISTS
Tara Beagan
Marie Clements
Kevin Loring
Kenneth T. Williams

MODERATOR
Ian Ross
DANCE OGICHIDAS
Saturday, March 20 at 10am
Step into the world of Indigenous dance and find out what it takes to tell a story through movement. Their combination of skills have seen these movers and shakers perform on stages around the world. Moderator Sandra Laronde, an arts leader for three decades, is joined by Santee Smith, Founding and Managing Artistic Director of Kaha:wi Dance Theatre; Buffy Handel, founder of Aboriginal School of Dance; and Waawaate Fobister, a force of contemporary and traditional dance.

PANELISTS
Waawaate Fobister
Buffy Handel
Santee Smith

MODERATOR
Sandra Laronde

ACIMOWIN (TO TELL STORY)
Sunday, March 21 at 10am
Traditionally, the winter season was the time for story. But with book publishing, stories remain year-round and Indigenous storytellers are at an all-time high. So why are there so many books hitting the shelves now? Award-winning Winnipeg authors Katherena Vermette, David A. Robertson, Tasha Spillett-Sumner and Brett Huson join author and moderator Michael Hutchinson to share why they’re part of a growth in Indigenous literature, and why each of these authors picked up the pen to tell a story.

PANELISTS
Brett Huson
David A. Robertson
Tasha Spillett-Sumner
Katherena Vermette

MODERATOR
Michael Hutchinson
Play Excerpts, Music & Art

EXCERPTS FROM THE STAGE
Friday, March 19 at 7pm

Falen Johnson hosts this evening of excerpts from one-person plays from actors and playwrights who have challenged us to look at the Indigenous world from different viewpoints. Darrell Dennis, star of TV, radio and stage, brings an excerpt from his play *Tales of an Urban Indian*. Acclaimed actor Cheri Maracle performs an excerpt from *Paddle Song*, a one-woman play by Dinah Christie and Tom Hill about Mohawk great E. Pauline Johnson; and Michelle Thrush, best known for her role in APTN’s *Blackstone*, brings out her *Inner Elder*.

HOST
Falen Johnson

GUESTS
Darrell Dennis
Cheri Maracle
Michelle Thrush
MUSIC OF THE LAND  
Saturday, March 20 at 7pm

The Indigenous Music Awards presents a night of musical guests from their Performance Series. Hosted by David McLeod, the general manager of NCI-FM and the producer of the Indigenous Music Countdown, his love of music shines through in his enthusiasm for Indigenous musicians. You will learn what Indigenous music really is. (Hint: It’s not one musical genre.) There will be something for everyone from country to rock to blues.

GUESTS

HOST
David McLeod

HOST
KC Adams

HOST
Jaimie Isaac

GUESTS
Don Amero
Ila Barker
The Johnnys
Murray Porter

A MILE IN OUR MOCCASINS  
March 18 – 21

From the warmth and comfort of your own home, join us on a walking tour of Indigenous public art installations and murals in Winnipeg any time during the festival. Multi-disciplinary, award-winning artist KC Adams and Jaimie Isaac, the curator of WAG’s Indigenous and Contemporary Art, invite you to take a stroll with them as they discuss the importance of public art spaces while also sharing the stories and the meanings behind each piece. And they may just have a special surprise in store!

HOST
KC Adams

HOST
Jaimie Isaac
Winnipeg-based artist KC Adams graduated from Concordia University with a BFA. She has been in numerous solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, three biennales and many residencies including the National Museum of the American Indian in New York. Her work is in many permanent collections nationally and internationally. Twenty pieces from the Cyborg Hybrid series are in the permanent collection of the National Art Gallery in Ottawa and her installation Birch Bark Ltd is in the collection of the Canadian Consulate of Australia, NSW. She helped design a 30-foot public art sculpture called Niimamaa. Adams was awarded the Winnipeg Arts Council’s Making A Mark Award and her book Perception: A Photo Series was one of Quill and Quire’s 2019 Books of the Year.

An engaging storyteller, singer-songwriter and performer, three-time JUNO Award nominee Don Amero has been tirelessly touring, performing and speaking across Canada for the last decade, earning the respect and attention of the Canadian music industry and fans alike. With a proven ability to effortlessly and genuinely connect with his audience, his talents have been much sought after, and in early 2019 he became a part of the MDM Recordings Inc. roster. Don has also been recognized for this work as an amplifier of Indigenous thought and ideas. Amero, who is of Cree and Métis heritage, hopes to continue the work being done when it comes to building bridges between all communities in Canada. With uplifting beauty across seven albums, Amero creates a lasting impression, with an artistic focus in making music that he hopes will be medicine for others. donamero.ca

With soul and voice as smooth as warm honey, singer-songwriter Ila Barker captures audiences with her sweet melodies and dynamic presence. Ila is of mixed Anishinaabe and settler heritage with roots running deep in the Manitoban prairies. Her craft is seasoned with rich history and powerful refined textures. Coming from a long line of storytellers, she fuses authentic and timeless notes creating moments of serenity and blissful escape. In February of 2020 Ila released a single called “Let Go.” Atmospheric and stripped down, this collaboration with UK based artist Milan André was recorded off the floor in one take in the northern Cree nation of Nemaska, Quebec. “Let Go” landed on the National Indigenous Music Countdown, and climbed up the charts for three months straight hitting the top 15. Currently Ila is in the planning stages of a future release.
Community is the foundation of our business.

Deloitte is proud to support Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's inaugural presentation of The Bridge: A Festival of Ideas

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Tara Beagan is a Ntlaka’pamux and Irish “Canadian” halfbreed. She is cofounder/codirector of ARTICLE 11 with Andy Moro. ARTICLE 11 has worked across Turtle Island, in Aotearoa, Australia and Scotland, and is based in Mohkinstsis (Calgary.) Beagan served as AD of Native Earth Performing Arts (Toronto) from Feb 2011 to Dec 2013. She’s been in residence at Cahoots (Toronto), NEPA, the National Arts Centre (Ottawa), Berton House (Dawson City) and now at Prairie Theatre Exchange (Winnipeg.) Seven of her 32 plays are published. Two plays have received Dora nominations, with one win. In 2020 Honour Beat won the Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award and Beagan the Siminovitch Prize for Drama, playwriting.

Rachel Beaulieu, the owner of Can Dream Productions, is from Sandy Bay First Nation in southern Manitoba. Rachel has focused her creative energy on directing. Her work is influenced by her unique perspective as a First Nations woman and aims to make space for creators with a diverse vision. Rachel was selected for the Women in the Director's Chair, Story and Leadership program (2020) and NSI IndigiDocs (2020). She also saw success as her first film, Red River Roots, debuted at both LA Skins Fest (Hollywood) and Gimli Film Festival (2018). Her latest documentary debuted in December 2019, Songs in the Key of Cree, a behind-the-scenes film guided by Cree playwright Tomson Highway, highlights Rachel’s expertise as a director.

Ryan R. Black is mixed blood Saulteaux (First Nations) and West-Indian/African actor, writer, producer, and director who has been working in the film, television and theatre industries for 29 years. As the son of Indigenous and immigrant parents, he has a unique perspective on the development of Canadian identity and culture. Passionate and deeply rooted in storytelling as a conduit for emotional, spiritual and physical health, he has dedicated himself to helping others find their true potential.

Columpa Bobb has been a theatre practitioner for over 33 years now. She has worked across Canada and the globe. Her work has been seen in Brazil, India, Australia, Switzerland and New Zealand. She is the founding Artistic Director of the Aboriginal Arts Training and Mentorship program as well as Urban Indigenous Theatre Company. Columpa is excited to be a part of this event.
Marie Clements
*From Script to Stage – Panelist*

Marie has ignited her brand of artistry within a variety of mediums including film, TV, radio, and live performance. Her latest project, the feature drama *Red Snow* has won Most Popular Canadian Feature Film at the Vancouver International Film Festival, Best Canadian Feature Film at the Edmonton International Film Festival; earned nominations for Best Actor, Best Supporting Actress, Best Film, and won the Best Director of a Feature at the 2019 American Indian Film Festival (AIFF) in San Francisco and Best Achievement in Film from the LA Skins Festival in Los Angeles. *Red Snow* has recently been nominated for 10 Leo Awards and her feature music documentary, *The Road Forward*, produced by the NFB, premiered at Hot Docs, opened the 2017 DOXA Documentary Film Festival, closed the 2018 ImagineNATIVE Film Festival, receiving five Leo Awards including Best Production, Best Director, and Best Screenwriter.

Rosanna Deerchild
*In Conversation – Host*

Rosanna Deerchild (She/Her) is Cree, from the community of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation. She is a storyteller with more than 20 years’ experience as a journalist, broadcaster and a poet. Most recently, she has been heard as the host of CBC Radio One’s Unreserved for six seasons. Currently, she is creating a podcast called This Place, which will focus on Indigenous history in Canada. Her debut poetry collection *this is a small northern town* shared her reflections of growing up in a racially-divided place. It won the 2009 Aqua Books Lansdowne Prize for Poetry. Her second book, *calling down the sky* is a collaborative work with her mother who was forced to attend Indian Residential School. She is also writing her first play with Royal MTC’s Pimootayowin Creators Circle and her third collection of poetry.

Darrell Dennis
*Excerpts from the Stage – Guest*

Darrell Dennis is an award winning First Nations writer/actor/director/comedian, with over 30 years of success in the film, television, theatre, radio, and comedy industries. Notably, he is an alumnus of the Sundance Screenwriting Program and was the first ever Native cast member in any of the Second City comedy companies. Currently, Darrell is in development with CBC for an hour-long drama. He is also a writer on the CBC developed series *Little Bird*. Recently, Darrell was the director, head writer, and cast member of the APTN series *The Guilt Free Zone* which was nominated for two Canadian Comedy Awards. He was also the co-winner of the 2019 *Just For Laughs: Stand up and Pitch Competition* for his TV pilot *Big Game.*
Waawaate Fobister is an actor, dancer, playwright, choreographer, instructor and a producer, currently residing in Winnipeg. A proud Anishnaabe from Grassy Narrows First Nation. A recipient of two Dora awards for outstanding actor and play for Agokwe, Humber College outstanding actor, Mark S. Bonham Centre award from University of Toronto for their advocacy and public knowledge in sexual diversity. Waawaate also has many nominations, including Ontario Premiers’ Award, K.M Hunter Award and Sterling Award – Edmonton. Waawaate trained and studied Theatre Arts – Performance at Humber College, Indigenous Dance at Banff Centre for the Arts, Summer School Intensives at Toronto Dance Theatre, Intensives at Centre for Indigenous Theatre and Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. Waawaate has performed in many major theatre companies across Canada and their work and research has taken them to many places as an artist, including Japan, UK, US, and many coasts across Turtle Island. Currently, they are busy, teaching at MTYP, is commissioned to write a 10-min play set to perform at Royal MTC, and is the Curator, Indigenous Programming for the Kick & Push Festival. While the world is at a standstill, Waawaate has a couple new works that are brewing and is very excited to share with you. Stay tuned!

Buffy Handel is a successful award-winning entrepreneur, artist, choreographer, designer, athlete, educator, author and speaker whose vision is strong in purpose. She is the founder of the Aboriginal School of Dance and has been recognized for her unique approach to the arts and culture. She has mentored thousands of youth throughout the years based on the theory of applying Native American traditions to mainstream manners. She has partnered with the Contemporary School of Dance to deliver new choreography during the Rite of Spring while performing live alongside the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra a total of three times. Buffy has many personalized seminars, workshops and presentations which are educational and inspirational. She has 25 years experience in the business world and can conceptualize the balance on how one can have a personal and professional life connected without fusing the two together. With sold out productions such as Te’pahkop and Ninim’iwe, Buffy’s ability to mentor youth, create musical compositions, design regalia with props and create business partnerships has lead her to receive the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Metal and Woman of Distinction Award. She takes great pride volunteering as the First Nation Pavilion Coordinator for a seven-day festival which has scored a 5.95/6 in the professional deliver catering to 48,000 people.
Tomson Highway

In Conversation – Guest

Tomson Highway is a Cree writer and pianist/songwriter from Northern Manitoba. Among many others, his best-known works are the plays: The Rez Sisters, Dry Lips Ought Move to Kapuskasing, and the best-selling novel, Kiss of the Fur Queen. He lives in Gatineau, Quebec with his loving partner of 37 years where, together, they are busy, and very happy grandpapas of two angelic young children. He is working on a hot new book that will be sure to shock the living daylights out of the world. You must read it.

Brett Huson

Acimowin (To tell story) – Panelist

Hetxw’m Gyetxw, also known as Brett D. Huson (he/him/his), is from the Gitxsan Nation of the Northwest Interior of British Columbia, Canada. Growing up in this strong matrilineal society, Brett developed a passion for the culture, land, and politics of his people, and a desire to share their knowledge and stories. Brett has worked in the film and television industry for over 13 years and is also a volunteer board member for such organizations as Ka Ni Kanichihk and sakihiwe Festival. The award-winning series Mothers of Xsan is Brett’s first series of books and part of a larger vision he has in sharing the worlds of the Gitxsan Nation. As Brett continues creating new art and working on new books, he is also working with the Prairie Climate Centre at the University of Winnipeg to connect science and Indigenous Knowledges. With the support of his wife Jeri and their children Warren and Ruby, Brett endeavours to continue sharing stories with his writing, artwork and photography.

Michael Hutchinson

Acimowin (To tell story) – Moderator

Michael Hutchinson is a citizen of the Misipawistik Cree Nation in Treaty 5 territory, north of Winnipeg. As a young adult, he worked as a bartender, a caterer for rock concerts and movie shoots, and, eventually, as a print reporter for publications such as The Calgary Straight and Aboriginal Times. After being headhunted by the Indian Claims Commission, Michael moved from journalism to the communications side of the desk and worked for the ICC in Ottawa as a writer. He returned to his home province to start a family. Since then, he has worked as the Director of Communications for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and as a project manager for the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, where he helped create the “We are all treaty people” campaign. Over seven years ago, he made mini-documentaries for the first season of APTN Investigates. Then became host of APTN National News and produced APTN’s sit-down interview show, Face to Face, and APTN’s version of Politically Incorrect, The Laughing Drum. After leaving APTN to return to communications, Michael worked for advocacy organizations like the Assembly of First Nations and the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak. He is currently a co-host on CTV Morning Live Winnipeg. Michael’s greatest accomplishments are his two lovely daughters.
Dr. Heather Igloliorte, an Inuk from Nunatsiavut, holds the Tier 1 University Research Chair in Circumpolar Indigenous Arts and is an associate professor in the Department of Art History at Concordia University in Montréal, where she directs the SSHRC Partnership Grant, Inuit Futures in Arts Leadership and co-directs the Indigenous Futures Research Centre. Her research on Inuit and other Indigenous art histories, critical museology and curatorial practice has been published by Duke University Press, TOPIA, Art Journal, and McGill – Queen’s University Press, among others; she has co-edited special issues of both PUBLIC 54: Indigenous Art: New Media and the Digital (2016) and RACAR: Continuities Between Eras: Indigenous Arts (2017). Her essay “Curating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Inuit Knowledge in the Qallunaat Art Museum,” was awarded the 2017 Distinguished Article of the Year from Art Journal. Heather has been a curator for fifteen years; her exhibition SakKijajuk: Art and Craft from Nunatsiavut received an Award of Outstanding Achievement from the Canadian Museums Association in 2017.

Jaimie Isaac is the Curator of Indigenous and Contemporary Arts at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, an interdisciplinary artist, and member of Sagkeeng First Nation in Treaty 1 Territory. Isaac holds a degree in Art History from the University of Winnipeg and a Masters of Arts from the University of British Columbia. Isaac co-founded of The Ephemerals Collective, which was long-listed for the 2017 and 2019 Sobey Art Award. Jaimie collaborated with an artistic team on a public sculpture at the Forks called Nimama at South Point path: Niizhoziibean and collaborated on a public art project, Cyclical Motion: Indigenous Art & Placemaking. Recently, Jaimie received an honouree for Leaders of Tomorrow from the Manitoba Museum 50th Tribute Awards 2020 and was a CBC Future 40 Finalist 2020.

The Johnnys are a high-energy rock’n’roll band, founded by partners Veronica Johnny (2Spirit, vocals, guitar) and Dave Johnny (drums). Veronica’s nehiyaw (Cree) heritage is reflected in some of the band’s lyric content, with Indigenous influences on topics such as the environment, social justice and political change. The band’s early recordings are more punk influenced, characterized by fun, up-tempo songs while later releases have a classic-rock feel. Their first three albums were all nominated for national music awards in Canada, and they’ve been featured...
in television and film. Songs “Time to Shine” and “Have a Good Time, All the Time” both reached #2 on the National Aboriginal Music Countdown radio charts. Their fourth album, Leathers & Feathers, was released in June 2020. The Johnnys usually perform live as a five- or six-piece band, with lead guitar, bass and backing vocalists, delivering rowdy, humour-filled performances. Veronica and Dave occasionally perform as a duo, with Dave on bass. The Johnnys are passionate about Indigenous language revitalization, the environment, and empowering music projects with youth groups. When not rocking the house, Veronica and Dave paint, write, pursue other music projects, and host inspiring workshops for artists, women and youth.

Falen Johnson
Excerpts from the Stage - Host

Falen Johnson is Mohawk and Tuscarora (Bear Clan) from Six Nations Grand River Territory. She is a writer, podcaster, and radio host. Her plays include Salt Baby, Two Indians, and Ipperwash for which she received a Dora nomination. Her writing has been featured in Brick, The Canadian Theatre Review and Granta Magazine. She has also written for Urban Native Girl (APTN) and Merchants of the Wild (APTN) and the 2020 Inspire Awards (CBC) and she was named one to watch in 2020 by Maclean’s magazine. Falen also hosts the Secret Life of Canada (CBC Podcasts) with Leah Simone Bowen and Unreserved (CBC Radio One).

Margo Kane
Theatre Matriarchs - Panelist

Cree-Saulteaux Métis performing artist, Margo Kane is the Founder and Artistic Managing Director of Full Circle: First Nations Performance. For over 40 years she has been active as an actor, performing artist and community cultural worker. Her desire to share artistic performance that has meaning for her people is the catalyst for her extensive work, travels and consultation within Indigenous communities across Canada and abroad. Moonlodge, her acclaimed one-woman show, an Indigenous Canadian classic, toured for over 10 years nationally and internationally. The Sydney Press (AU) during The Festival of the Dreaming praised it as being ‘in the top echelon of solo performance.’ She developed and runs the annual Talking Stick Festival celebrating its 20th Anniversary this coming year and numerous programs including Moccasin Trek: Arts on the Move!, Indian Acts and an Indigenous Ensemble Performing Arts Program in Vancouver. She has received numerous awards and honours including an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of the Fraser Valley, the Order of Canada from the Governor General and, most recently, an International Citation of Merit from ISPA - International Society for the Performing Arts.
Frances Koncan (she/they) is a mixed Anishinaabe and Slovene writer, director, and dramaturg based in Treaty 1 territory on the land currently known as Winnipeg. Originally from Couchiching First Nation, she earned her MFA in Playwriting from the City University of New York Brooklyn College where she developed a passion for experimental theatre placed as an oppositional force within contemporary western culture, and for drinking very expensive cocktails. She is currently part of the 2021 cohort of the BIPOC Directing Fellowship ThisGen by WhyNot Theatre, the Associate Director of Outside the March’s upcoming show The Trojan Girls and is working on three play commissions. Twitter/Instagram: @franceskoncan

Sandra LaRonde

A highly accomplished arts leader, creator, and innovator, Sandra Laronde (Misko Kishigoo Migizii Kwe) which means “Red Sky Eagle Woman” in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway) language, has over 27 years of experience in the arts and culture sector. She is from the Teme-Augama-Anishinaabe (People of the Deep Water) in Temagami, northern Ontario. Sandra Laronde plays a pivotal role in the ongoing Indigenous cultural resurgence in Canada. For close to three decades, she has created an extraordinary body of work and inspired programming with collaborators that has led to powerful, transformational arts experiences elevating the ecology of arts and culture in this country while strengthening the international presence of Indigenous arts. Sandra founded Red Sky Performance in 2000, a leading company of contemporary Indigenous performance in Canada and worldwide. Their world stage line-up includes the Venice Biennale, two Cultural Olympiads (Beijing and Vancouver), Jacob’s Pillow, World Expo Shanghai, among others. At the same time, she remains committed on a grassroots level in urban, rural, and reserve communities across Turtle Island. For nine robust years, Sandra is the former Director of Indigenous Arts at the Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity from 2007 – 2016.

Kevin Loring

Kevin is N’laka’pamux from the Lytton First Nation in British Columbia. He was appointed the inaugural Artistic Director of Indigenous Theatre at the National Arts Centre of Canada in 2017. He’s a graduate of Studio 58, Langara College’s Professional Theatre Training Program. He was an ensemble member and an instructor at Full Circle First Nations Performance: Ensemble Training Program. He’s an accomplished actor of the stage and screen as well as a voice actor for animation and narration. He’s also an award-winning playwright, and theatre director and the founding Artistic Director of Savage Production Society.
Cheri Maracle is a multi-award nominated actor/singer/songwriter from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, Ontario. She has been performing in Canada, the US and Europe in the last 20 years. Cheri has released three critically acclaimed albums, *Closer To Home* (2006), *If I Am Water* (2013), and jazz compilation, *Ache of Love* (2014). Cheri has many TV, film and stage credits to her name including: *Blackstone, DeGrassi, Murdoch Mysteries, Four in the Morning, Dead Man’s Gun, Moccasin Flats* and *Blackfly*, to name a few. Cheri has also co-hosted the *Indspire Awards* (2007/2014/2017) televised on Global and was a featured actor/singer in NFB documentary *The Road Forward*. She is a Gemini-nominated actress, and has been nominated twice for the KM Hunter theatre award for her body of theatre work. Her one-woman musical theatre show *Paddle Song*, based on famed Canadian poet Pauline Johnson, garnered her a best solo performance nomination, at the High Performance Rodeo Festival in Calgary, 2016, and was performed in Norway, and India as well.

David McLeod is a member of the Pine Creek First Nation, with family roots also in the Métis village of Camperville, Manitoba. Since 2000, he’s been actively involved within various stage productions and writing projects. He appeared in the late Doug Nepinak’s *Incident at Oka* during the Winnipeg Fringe Festival as well as a CBC Radio broadcast. He’s appeared in Shakespeare *In The Red* which was staged at the Prairie Theatre Exchange. David also took to the stage during the Winnipeg Comedy Festival, once as a comedy troupe member and another performing a stand-up piece written by Darrell Dennis. His writing has appeared in several anthologies, including *Let the Drum Be My Heartbeat, Prairie Fire* and *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water*, as well as several chapbooks. He was also involved in Winnipeg’s spoken word scene for several years, winning the Winnipeg Centennial Library’s inaugural spoken word contest. He enjoys bringing about a mixture of humour with political commentary.

**PIMOOTAYOWIN: A FESTIVAL OF NEW WORK – JUNE 8-12**

The inaugural Pimootayowin Creators Circle is led by Governor General Award-winning playwright Ian Ross, assisted by Katie German. Artists Lynette Bonin, Jim Compton, Rosanna Deerchild, Kathleen MacLean, David McLeod and Tracey Nepinak were each invited to develop a play for the stage. Please join us for Pimootayowin: A Festival of New Work from June 8-12.
Monique (Guna and Rappahannock nations) is an Actor/Playwright. Dedicated to a theatrical practice as an act of healing, of reclaiming historical/cultural memory and of resistance. Spun from the family-web of Spiderwoman Theater (NY), her theatrical practice embraces her artistic lineage through mining stories embedded in the body in connection to land and place. Monique taught Indigenous Theatre in theory, process and practice at Brown University, University of Illinois, Institute of American Indian Arts, McMaster University and is former co-director of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre. She lectured on land-based embodied research and taught performance workshops throughout Canada, US, Latin America and Europe. Recent roles: Aunt Shadie in Marie Clements’ *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*, the inaugural production of the new Indigenous Theatre department at NAC, with the NAC Orchestra in the European tour *I lost my Talk* as part of the *Life Reflected* series, *Izzie M.: The Alchemy of Enfreakment* written by Monique with a diverse artistic collaborative team in Tara Beagan’s *Honour Beat* for TC. Upcoming: dramaturg for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre’s Sken:en created by Santee Smith. Founder and Artistic Director of Chocolate Woman Collective.

Kent is an interdisciplinary Cree visual artist. A member of Fisher River Cree Nation in Treaty 5 Territory (Manitoba), he lives and works in Dish With One Spoon Territory (Toronto). Known for his provocative interventions into Western European and American art history, Monkman explores themes of colonization, sexuality, loss, and resilience – the complexities of historic and contemporary Indigenous experiences – across painting, film/video, performance and installation. His gender-fluid alter ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle often appears in his work as a time-traveling, shape-shifting, supernatural being who reverses the colonial gaze to challenge received notions of history and Indigenous peoples. His work has been exhibited at institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Denver Art Museum, Philbrook Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, The Royal Ontario Museum, The National Gallery of Canada, Hayward Gallery, Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art, Musée d’art Contemporain de Rochechouart, Maison Rouge and Palais de Tokyo. He had two nationally touring solo exhibitions in Canada – *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* (2017-2020) and *The Triumph of Mischief* (2007-2010).
2021: ART & (RE)CONCILIATION

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Julie Nagam
In Conversation – Guest

Dr. Julie Nagam (Métis/German/Syrian) is a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts, Collaboration and Digital Media and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art History at the University of Winnipeg. She is the inaugural Artistic Director for 2020/21 for Nuit Blanche Toronto, the largest public exhibition in North America. Dr. Nagam’s SSHRC research includes digital makerspaces and incubators, mentorship, digital media and design, international collaborations and place-based knowledge. As a scholar and artist she is interested in revealing the ontology of land, which contains memory, knowledge and living histories. Dr. Nagam’s scholarship, curatorial and artistic practice has been featured nationally and internationally. She was the Concordia University and Massey University (NZ) Scholar in Residence for 2018/19, and will be the Terra Foundation Visiting Scholar at the University of Sydney (AUS) for 2021/22. Dr. Nagam is the Director of Aabijijiwan New Media Lab and Co-Director of Kishaadigeh Collaborative Research Centre at the University of Winnipeg.

Barb & Clarence Nepinak
Elders

Clarence and Barbara Nepinak are members of Pine Creek First Nation. They work tirelessly as cultural advisors for many organizations and are Elders for the First Peoples Investment Inc., which provides training and developments opportunities for First Nations and Métis organizations.

In July 2019, they were recognized with the Order of Manitoba. Both have been appointed to a National Board for Climate Change initiatives with federal government and First Nation Representatives based in Ottawa. They are Elders-in-Residence for Dalnavert Museum, St. James Historical Museum and the National Medical Health Lab. Both have traveled internationally as Cultural Ambassadors to represent Canada in Brazil, Taiwan, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and Santiago, Chile. Barb and Clarence continue to work where they are needed.

Tracey Nepinak
Theatre Matriarchs – Panelist

Tracey’s roots go back at least 6 generations in the Peguis First Nation family photos. The daughter of a residential school survivor, Tracey knows firsthand, that the fallout of flawed ideologies imposed on children, can destroy families. Tracey found her theatre voice, quite by accident, when she stumbled onto Vancouver’s, Spirit Song Native Theatre School and enrolled as a student. Shortly after graduating the 9 month intensive program, Tracey moved home to Manitoba, and completed a BA Honours degree. Tracey has worked professionally since 1994. Recent theatre, film and directing credits include: Dori in Katharsis (PTE); Director of Songide’ewin (Sarasvàti); Rose in Burden of Truth (Eagle Vision).
Blues Man Murray Porter’s music career has taken him all over the world for the last 40 years. He’s a proud Mohawk man from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in southern Ontario, who now lives on Squamish Nation unceded territory in North Vancouver. Murray may have a blues soul to the core, but he also grew up on rock and roll, R & B and country music. Porter’s first CD since his 2012 JUNO Award for ‘Aboriginal Album of the Year’ is titled, “STAND UP!” and reflects these early musical influences. He strongly feels that this album is some of his best music to date. This album was nominated at the 2019 Native American Music Awards for ‘Best Blues Recording’ and ‘Best Male Artist of the Year’. One song, ‘Love Will Find A Way’, words by Elaine Bomberry and music by Murray Porter, charted at Number One, on the Indigenous Music Countdown, the week of July 18, 2020.

David A. Robertson is the author of numerous books for young readers including When We Were Alone, which won the 2017 Governor General’s Literary Award. The Barren Grounds, the first book in the middle-grade The Misewa Saga series, received a starred review from Kirkus and was a Kirkus and Quill & Quire best middle-grade book of 2020, as well as a USBBY and Texas Lone Star selection, and is shortlisted for the Ontario Library Association’s Silver Birch Award. His memoir, Black Water: Family, Legacy, and

Blood Memory, also came out in 2020. It was a Globe and Mail top 100 Book of the Year, a Quill & Quire Book of the Year, and a Maclean’s 20 Books You Need to Read this Winter selection. A sought-after speaker and educator, Dave is a member of the Norway House Cree Nation and currently lives in Winnipeg.

Ian Ross was born in McCreary, Manitoba. He calls the First Nation of Pinaymootang, the Métis community of Kinosota and the city of Winnipeg, home. His play, fareWel, won the Governor General’s Award for English Drama in 1997. The Third Colour, his most recent play received the Evie Award for Best New Play of 2019. His commentaries as Joe from Winnipeg on CBC radio and television, as well as NCI, were very popular. Ian has also been a drama instructor and educator for several years and currently heads the Pimootaywin Creators Circle at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre. He continues to write and live in Winnipeg.
Senator Murray Sinclair was a judge for 28 years, the first Indigenous judge appointed in Manitoba and Canada’s second. He served as Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in Manitoba and as Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). He has been invited to speak throughout Canada, the United States and internationally, including the Cambridge Lectures for members of the Judiciary of various Commonwealth Courts in England and served as an adjunct professor of law at the University of Manitoba. He has won numerous awards, including the National Aboriginal Achievement Award, the Manitoba Bar Association’s Equality Award (2001) and its Distinguished Service Award (2016), and has received Honorary Doctorates from 14 Canadian universities. Senator Sinclair was appointed to the Senate in 2016 and retired in January 2021 to work on his memoir entitled *Who We Are* – to be published with McClelland & Stewart in Fall 2022.

Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair is Anishinaabe (St. Peter’s/Little Peguis) and an Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba. He is an award-winning writer, editor and activist who was named one of *Monocle Magazine*’s “Canada’s Top 20 Most Influential People” and he won the 2018 Canadian columnist of the year at the National Newspaper Awards for his bi-weekly columns in *The Winnipeg Free Press*. In 2019 he won Peace Educator of the Year from the Peace and Justice Studies Association based at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He is an international media commentator as a part of the “Power Panel” on CBC’s Power & Politics and National Affairs panel on CBC’s *The Current*. A collection of his award-winning columns called *Winipek* will be published with McClelland & Stewart in Spring 2022.

Santee Smith (Tekaronhiahkwa) is a multidisciplinary artist and producer from the Kahnyen’kehàka Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River. She trained at Canada’s National Ballet School, completed Physical Education and Psychology degrees from McMaster University and an MA in Dance from York University. Santee premiered her inaugural work *Kaha:wi* in 2004 and later founded Kaha:wi Dance Theatre which has grown into an internationally renowned company. Her body of work includes 14 productions and numerous short works, collaborations and commissions for stage and TV. She is a sought-after teacher and speaker on Indigenous performance and culture. Through embodied storytelling, performance and designing her work speaks to Indigenous identity and continuance. Smith is the 19th Chancellor of McMaster University. kahawidance.org, @kahawidance, @santeesmith
Tasha Spillett-Sumner (she/her) draws her strength from both her Cree & Trinidadian bloodlines. She is a new mother, a celebrated educator, author, poet and emerging scholar. Tasha is most heart-tied to contributing to community-led work that centres land and water defence, and the protection of Indigenous women and girls. In her work as a doctoral candidate, she is weaving together her cultural identity, and commitment to community to produce a body of research that amplifies Indigenous women’s demands for justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, and serves as a continuation of the resistance against the assault of colonialism.

Celeste Sutherland is an Indigenous illustrator and filmmaker from Opaskwayak Cree Nation. A recent graduate of Red River College’s Digital Media Design and alumni of CBC’s New Indigenous Voices, Celeste enjoys finding work in storytelling. In 2019, she illustrated her first children’s book called Kerri Berry Lynn, about a young Indigenous girl with seven dogs. In 2020, Celeste began her journey into animation to bring more of her stories to life.

Michelle Thrush is Nehiyaw (Cree) with French and Scottish intermingled, and was born and raised in Mohkinstis (Calgary). Ms Thrush was recently appointed the Artistic Director of Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society and was a past co-director and board member. Over 30 years of experience as an actor, writer and director in film, television and theatre. Best known for her film work and her leading role as Gail Stoney in Blackstone. In 2011 she was honoured to receive a Gemini Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role. Michelle spent the last few years touring her solo show Inner Elder, which premiered at the 2018 High Performance Rodeo. She has been a steady force in the Indigenous Arts community. It is hugely important, as the Artistic Director, to create a safe place for artists to be vulnerable and to become a community to each other. Using an Indigenous-led process will always be the strength of what makes MT7 so successful. She’s also known for her work in community across Canada with youth and children, which is her greatest passion. Her most important production to date is her two beautiful daughters.
Katherena Vermette is a Métis writer from Treaty 1 territory, the heart of the Métis nation, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her first book, North End Love Songs (The Muses’ Company) won the Governor General’s Literary Award for Poetry. Her novel, The Break (House of Anansi) was a bestseller in Canada and won multiple awards and nominations. She is also the author of the picture book The Girl and The Wolf (Theytus), the graphic novel series A Girl Called Echo (Highwater Press), and co-wrote and co-directed the Canadian Screen Award-winning short doc, this river (NFB). Vermette lives with her family in a cranky old house within skipping distance of the temperamental Red River.

Jesse Wente is an Anishinaabe writer, broadcaster, speaker and arts leader. Born and raised in Toronto, and a member of the Serpent River First Nation. Best known for 24 years as a columnist for CBC Radio’s Metro Morning, 11 years with the Toronto International Film Festival, seven years as director of film programmes at the TIFF Bell Lightbox. An outspoken advocate for Indigenous rights and First Nations, Métis and Inuit art. He has spoken at the International Forum of Indigenous Peoples, Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, the Canadian Arts Summit, the Cultural Summit of the Americas, and many universities and colleges. Served on the board of directors of the Toronto Arts Council, The ImagineNative Film and Media Festival and Native Earth Performing Arts. Appointed Chair of the Canada Council for the Arts (only First Nations person to hold the position). Currently finishing his first book for Penguin Random House Canada. First Executive Director of the Indigenous Screen Office in 2018. Playback Magazine’s trailblazer of the year for 2020, included on Maclean’s 2020 Power List and Toronto Life’s 2020 list of the most influential Torontonians.
Kim Wheeler has brought positive Indigenous stories to mainstream and Indigenous media since 1993. She has carved out a career as a writer, publicist and producer across a variety of disciplines. Her audio work has been recognized by the New York Festivals, ImagineNative, Indigenous Music Awards and Prix Italia. Currently, Kim works from her treehouse media office with multiple clients in publicity, magazines, film and podcasts.

Kenneth T. Williams’ professional path is a “guidance counselor’s nightmare.” He’s been a soldier, bartender, rock musician, and door-to-door encyclopedia salesman. As a journalist, he was a member of the very first news team for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. Along the way, he’s had several plays produced on Canada’s stages and dramaturged many others from emerging playwrights. His newest plays, Paris SK, Miranda and The Herd, were presented in various media on the internet. He lives in Edmonton with his partner, Dr. Melissa Stoops, with their cats, Augustus and Drusilla, and is a professor in the Department of Drama at the University of Alberta. He is a member of the George Gordon First Nation in Treaty 4 territory.
In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) began a multi-year process to listen to Survivors, communities and others affected by the Residential School system.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:
trc.ca

In 2015, the TRC released their 93 Calls to Action (nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf), and transferred their work and collection of statements and documents to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), located at the University of Manitoba. The NCTR continues to work with communities to help save and preserve their Residential School experiences through statements and any form of remembrance or act of healing.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation:
nctr.ca

Legacy of Hope Foundation:
legacyofhope.ca

Winnipeg Public Library - Residential Schools Info Guide:
guides.wpl.winnipeg.ca/residentialschools/about

135 videos of people reading the TRC Report:
youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxPr_Rlsvg9JJWoiRx2kI2v24r_pu7JbR

“100 Years of Loss” timeline:
guides.wpl.winnipeg.ca/ld.php?content_id=27390316
Livestreamed Production

Sunday, March 21 at 2pm

A production by Bound to Create
Presented in association with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

ISITWENDAM (AN UNDERSTANDING)

Written and performed by Meegwun Fairbrother
Co-created and directed by Jack Grinhaus

Artistic Collaborator / Producer ................................. Lauren Brotman
Lighting Designer ..................................................... Melissa Joakim
Production Coordinator ............................................. Sarah Koehn
Sound Designer .......................................................... Marc Meriläinen
Projection Designer ................................................... Andrew Moro
Production Manager .................................................. Carla Ritchie
Movement Coach ...................................................... Carlos Rivera
Set Designer .............................................................. Hans Saefkow

The development of Isitwendam was supported in part by Native Earth Performing Arts and premiered in their 2018/19 season.

Isitwendam was workshoped at Theatre Northwest as part of their Innovation Series in their 2016/17 season and presented at TNW and the Full Circle Talking Stick Festival in 2020.

Isitwendam is a full-length play that will be presented live from Royal MTC’s Tom Hendry Warehouse Digital Studio.
Isitwendam (An Understanding) is the story of a young man in search of a truth, whose journey leads to a discovery about the father he loathed and lost, and an awakening of himself and his generation.

A fusion of western and Indigenous storytelling that includes Plains Indigenous Sign Language, drumming, ceremony, and song, this powerful, heartwrenching, yet humorous theatrical production explores various perspectives of atrocity and the steps we all need to take to find Isitwendam.

“Both chilling and heartbreaking... A piece of theatre that is full of forgiveness, compassion, understanding, and grace. A terrific piece of theatre.” — SLOTKIN LETTER
Meegwun Fairbrother is of Ojibway and Scottish origin, from Grassy Narrows First Nation and Toronto, Ontario. He is a traditional singer and a Northern traditional dancer with a BFA in acting from York University. Recent theatre credits: Isitwendam (An Understanding) (Native Earth Performing Arts); Incident at Vichy (Soulpepper); and Dreary and Izzy (Magnus Theatre). Recent film credits: CBC’s Burden of Truth; CTV’s Carter Files; APTN’s Mohawk Girls; and Syfy series Helix. In 2020 Meegwun took his Dora-nominated solo show Isitwendam (An Understanding) to Talking Stick Festival after a successful premiere in Toronto in 2019. Meegwun lives in Winnipeg where he continues to act and write for film and television. He is honoured and excited to share this show with Treaty 1 Territory.

Jack Grinhaus
Co-creator / Director / B2C Co-Artistic Director

Jack is an award-winning actor and director who has also worked in various streams as producer, designer, and writer for theatre, TV and film. He was the Artistic Director for the Canadian regional theatre Theatre NorthWest (2014-2019), was part of the 2010 Canadian Stage BASH Directors Residency as well as the inaugural Director’s Lab North at Tarragon Theatre. With over 40 plays produced and over half directed, he is one of Canada’s most prolific artists. Recent Credits include: Isitwendam (An Understanding) (Native Earth Performing Arts/B2C/Four Dora Nominations); Hedda Noir, Million Dollar Quartet, Alice in Wonderland, Half Life, The Secret Mask (Theatre Northwest); ART (Persephone Theatre/SAT Nomination Outstanding Direction); dirty butterfly (Obsidian Theatre/B2C); Phaedra’s Lust (Tapestry New Opera/B2C); Macbeth (Classical Theatre Project).

Lauren Brotman
Artistic Collaborator / Producer / B2C Co-Artistic Director

Lauren is an award-winning actor, creator, facilitator. For B2C: has created/ performed or produced since 2004. Associations include Phaedra’s Lust (Tapestry Opera); dirty butterfly (Obsidian); Isitwendam (An Understanding) (Native Earth Performing Arts/Theatre Northwest/Talking Stick/ multi-Dora nominated). While Associate Artist at TNW she performed in 4 seasons including in Hedda Noir (Artist of the Year) and created Painting the Streets and ShakespeareUnfolded. Lauren received a Dora Award for Outstanding Ensemble, a Dora nomination for The Grace Project created with Judith Thompson, the Jessica Fraser Award (Outstanding Contributions to TYA) and the Christopher Plummer Fellowship Award. She recently completed her short film Elle’s Valley and her play She Carries Me Again (upcoming work- shop). Gratitude to Royal MTC and the Isiwendam team. boundtocreate.com
Melissa Joakim
Lighting Designer

Melissa Joakim is a lighting and production designer in Toronto, Canada. She is a recipient of a Dora Award in Scenic Design, a nominee in Lighting Design and Scenic Design and for the Pauline McGibbon Award. Recent credits include: Environmental Design: Prophecy Fog (Theatre Centre and Paper Canoe Projects); This is the Point (Ahuri Theatre/Theatre Centre); Brain Storm (Lucid Ludic/Theatre Why Not). Lighting Design: TOKA (Theatre Passe Muraille/Lemontree Creations); Two Odysseys (Soundstreams/Signal Theatre). Projection Design: Oil (ARC Stage Company); Flashing Lights (Bad New Days/Ahuri Theatre). She is the stage manager and touring lighting designer for Sea Sick (Theatre Centre) which has toured extensively around the world.

Sarah Koehn
Production Coordinator

Sarah Koehn completed her BFA in acting (Memorial University), then joined the Soulpepper Academy training program in Toronto. Select theatre credits include: The Royal Comedians (Soulpepper); The Crucible (Soulpepper); Death of a Salesman (Soulpepper); The Great Mountain (RedSky Performance); and A Doll’s House (Soulpepper). Film credits include: Burden of Truth (CBC/eONE); Sweet Dreams (Pearson House Films); Reign (CW Network/CBS) and Handsome Devils (Discovery/OWN). Sarah has recently relocated to Winnipeg and is in the process of creating a production company with several projects already underway. She is thrilled to be part of the Isitwendam team in Winnipeg where she continues to audition for film and TV and is learning to box.

Marc Meriläinen
Sound Designer

Over the past 25 years Marc has released six studio albums under the Nadjiwan project with numerous award nominations and chart-topping singles. Marc has produced numerous other artists and composed original music for theatre and film. Marc has had the pleasure of touring this project across Canada and the United States with performances at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Mariposa Folk Festival, Northern Lights Festival Boreal, Hillside Music Festival, Folk On The Rocks, 2015 Pan Am Games, the American Native Music Awards and Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. Recently Marc released a cover version of ‘Rebound Girl’, a tribute to the memory of Kelly Fraser and is currently getting ready to release his next full-length album ‘Star Nation’, a “rock space opera”.

2021: ART & (RE)CONCILIATION
Andy Moro is a mixed-blood interdisciplinary artist and co-founder of ARTICLE 11 with Tara Beagan. A11’s theatrical Deer Woman has met international acclaim. The National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre will release a digital iteration by ARTICLE 11 in association with Downstage, Calgary. A11’s performance installations DECLARATION and ROOM have been adapted across Turtle Island. ROOM is presently being reinvented with Making Treaty 7 for a large-scale outdoor iteration in Calgary. Moro’s recent design includes Beagan’s Ministry of Grace for the Belfry, The Third Colour for PTE, Finding Wolastoq Voice at TNB, Dancers of Damelahamid’s Minowin, Spirit & Tradition, Unnatural and Accidental at NACIT and Kaha:wi’s Blood Tides. Upcoming is SkyDancers for A’nó:wara Dance, MTYP’s Frozen River and Tomson Highway’s The (Post) Mistress at Royal MTC.

Carla Ritchie
Production Manager

Carla is thrilled to be working with the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre and Bound to Create Theatre. She is an accomplished Stage/Production Manager, Technical Director, Designer, Writer, Director, Technician and reluctant Improvisor. Currently the Senior Manager of Member Services and the Digital Media Lab, at Artscape Daniels Launchpad, a hub for creative entrepreneurship. Carla has lived and worked across Canada, in Regina, Calgary, Manitoulin Island and Toronto and has toured to the US and China. Some favourite companies include Red Sky Performance, Tarragon Theatre, Ghost River Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects, One Yellow Rabbit, The Only Animal, Debajehmujig-Storytellers and Artscape.
Carlos Rivera is a director, choreographer and a performer, originally from Mexico City. He graduated from the National Theatre School in 2018 and is currently enrolled in the MFA in Directing for Theatre at the University of Ottawa. Carlos has worked and collaborated with several companies across Canada, including Red Sky Performance (Toronto), Globe Theatre (Regina), Raven Spirit Dance (Vancouver), MT Space (Kitchener), Puente Theatre (Victoria) and Ondinnok (Montréal). Currently, he is developing his first play, *The Little Rooster*, through an artistic residency with the support of Necessary Angel in collaboration with Aluna Theatre. He is continuously working on numerous artistic projects as a performer and director.

Hans Saefkow
Set Designer

Recently: *Isitwendam (An Understanding)* (Bound to Create Theatre/Native Earth Performing Arts/Talking Stick, Dora Nomination for Outstanding Design); *Stones in his Pockets* (Persephone Theatre – sadly not opened to an audience due to Covid); *It’s a Wonderful Life, The Drowning Girls* (Theatre Northwest); *The Sound of Music* (Western Canada Theatre); *The 39 Steps* (Blue Bridge Theatre). Highlights include design for Kevin Loring’s *Where The Blood Mixes* and *The Drowning Girls* at Theatre NorthWest. Hans is grateful and excited to be a part of the *Isitwendam* journey with Bound to Create Theatre and Royal MTC.
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Kathrin Moncaster, Senior Developer & Systems Administrator
Rachel Weesies, Director of Human Resources

ARTISTIC
Audrey Dwyer, Associate Artistic Director
Laurie Lam, Producer
Melissa Langdon, Apprentice Artistic Director
Kelly Thornton, Artistic Director
Kim Wheeler, Curator, The Bridge

BOX OFFICE
Sheena Baird, Director of Patron Services
Meaghan Fletcher, Assistant to the Director of Patron Services
Box Office Representatives: Sharon Bunn, Melissa Langdon, Robyn Pooley, Katie Schmidt, Katie Spring, Lilian Talabis

CARPENTRY (JOHN HIRSCH MAINSTAGE)
Brent Letain, Master Carpenter
Chris Seida, Scenic Carpenter

DEVELOPMENT
Lisa Hunt, Special & Donor Events Coordinator
Michael Joyal, Development Data Manager
Melissa Novecosky, Director of Development
Chris Turyk, Development Manager

MAINTENANCE
Andrew Drinnan, Building Superintendent
Chris Fletcher, Assistant Building Superintendent

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
Sue Caughlin, Marketing & Communications Manager
Katie Inverarity, Director of Marketing & Communications
Desiree La Yalle, Ticketing Application Specialist
Savannah Lillies, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

PAINT
Carla Schroeder, Head Scenic Artist

PRODUCTION
Christine Corheey, Production Associate
Chris Coyne, Technical Director, John Hirsch Mainstage
Zahra Larche, Assistant Production Manager
Russell Martin, Director of Production

PROPERTIES
Jamie Plummer, Head of Props
Lawrence Van Went, Master Builder (on leave)

STAGE CREW
Joan Lees-Miller, Head of Wardrobe
Gary Plouffe, Head of Sound
Claude Robert, Head Electrician
Chris Thomson, Head Carpenter

TOM HENDRY WAREHOUSE
Chris Brett, Head of Sound
Randy Zyla Harder, Head Electrician

WARDROBE
Thora Lamont, Head of Wardrobe
Jackie Van Winkle, Head Buyer & Accessories Coordinator

WIGS
Beverly Covert, Wigs & Makeup Supervisor

WINNIPEG FRINGE THEATRE FESTIVAL & MASTER PLAYWRIGHT FESTIVAL
Chuck McEwen, Executive Producer
Tori Popp, Festival Manager

HONORARY STAFF
Zaz Bajon, General Manager Emeritus
Steven Schipper, CM, OM, Artistic Director Emeritus

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF
THE BRIDGE
Rachel Beaulieu, Editor/Filmmaker
Ryan Black, Production Coordinator
Sarah Brazauskas, Graphic Designer (The Bridge logo)
Imajyn Cardinal, Videographer for Inner Elder
Tim Clark, Head of Sound
Christian Hadley, Camera Operator
Brian Heibert, Camera Operator
Jaymez, Projection Mapper and Camera Operator
Linda Nelson, Editor/Filmmaker
Shawn Powlowsk, Videographer for Paddle Song
Jacqueline Robertson, Head Electrician
Celeste Sutherland, Editor/Filmmaker
Rudy Wall, Carpenter

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